
Branding process
Lesson 2 part 1
LUMSA
UNIVERSITÀ

Before moving on, let's explore the key theme of our project work: Truth, Trust & Reality manipulation

Let’s go to menti.com

Mentimeter



Truth, Trust & Reality Manipulation

menti.com
1137 0427

Waiting for participants

OK, now let’s go on.
Last week, we explored what a brand is.

But how can we create and shape a brand?

Where do we start building a brand?

The Branding Process

3’13’’



Branding Foundations – Drew Boyd – Lynda.com

Brand Building Process

1. **Define** and **position** the Brand (Vision, Mission, Values, Brand Personality and Brand Value Proposition)
2. **Express** the brand
3. **Build awareness and reputation** for the brand
4. **Measure** the brand

Define and position the Brand

Defining the Brand

The main question is:
What is our value proposition?

To find the brand proposition we have to consider:

1. The brand owner perspective
2. The competitors and
3. The target audience

The Brand Value Proposition model by Interbrand (revisited)

1.
The Brand Owner Perspective

Brand owner perspective: Brand Identity

Brand Owner Perspective
(capabilities and vision for the brand)



Brand Vision, Mission, Purpose, Values, brand personality

Brand Owner's perspective

- **BRAND PURPOSE: Why we do what we do**
- **BRAND VISION: where we are going. What's next**
  - Our strategic goals
  - Our vision of the future
- **BRAND MISSION: What we do**
  - What we offer, based on our skills and expertise
- **BRAND VALUES: How we do things**
  - what are our core values, culture, beliefs

Brand Purpose

- **Purpose** is a company's **fundamental reason for being** – what it does every day to create value for its stakeholders.
- Purpose is not the sole pursuit of profits but the animating force for achieving them.

Back

About L'Oréal

More About L'Oréal

- Our Purpose
- Strategy & Model
- Quality & Safety Standards
- Our Performance



Vision: the big idea

- It's the dream. **The big dream**. It’s the ultimate goal.
- It's far-reaching. It’s **the vision of the future of the business**.
- And we also want to make sure that our vision excites people.

Mission and Vision statements explained – EntrepreneurNOW – LinkedIn Learning 2019

Mission: it's what we do

We could break up mission statements into two groups:

- **Business mission**
- **Social mission**

A social mission is optional. Some brands write the business mission and the social mission together, but they are different things.

Social missions usually don't make money... so investors prefer to clearly understand the business mission of a brand.

Mission and Vision statements explained – EntrepreneurNOW – LinkedIn Learning 2019

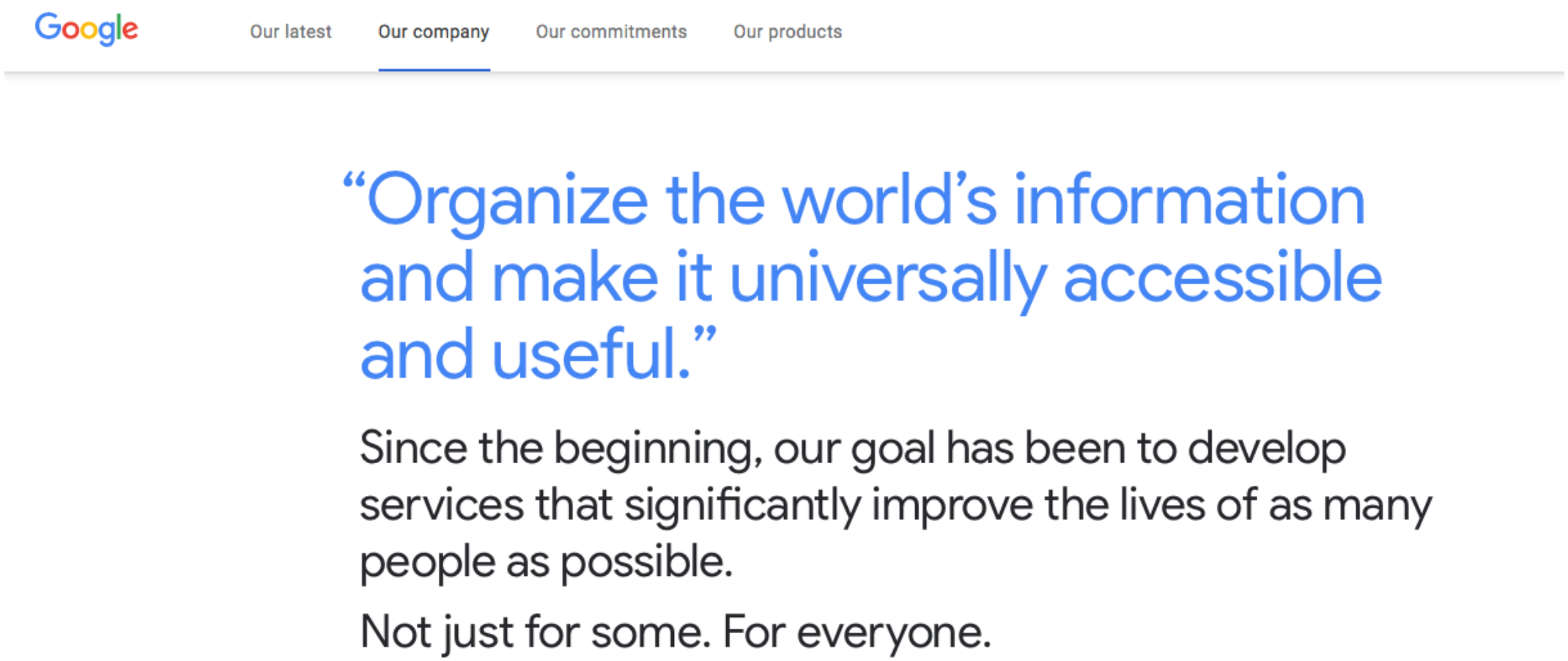
Business Mission

The business mission tells the **story of the business**.

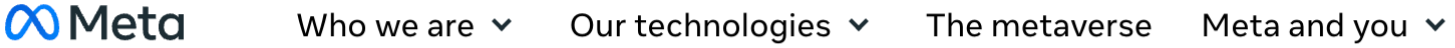
- It tells **what the business is**
- What its purpose is.
- It must be very **descriptive**.

Mission and Vision statements explained – EntrepreneurNOW – LinkedIn Learning 2019

Google's mission



Our mission | Meta



OUR MISSION

Giving people the power to build community and bring the world closer together

Vision Vs. Mission

2’37’’



Mission and Vision statements explained – EntrepreneurNOW – LinkedIn Learning 2019

Values

Values are very important **to guide behaviours within the organization**.
They must be **inspiring** and tell employees
how to do things
(e.g. with integrity, commitment, etc.)

Our values | Pioneer Food

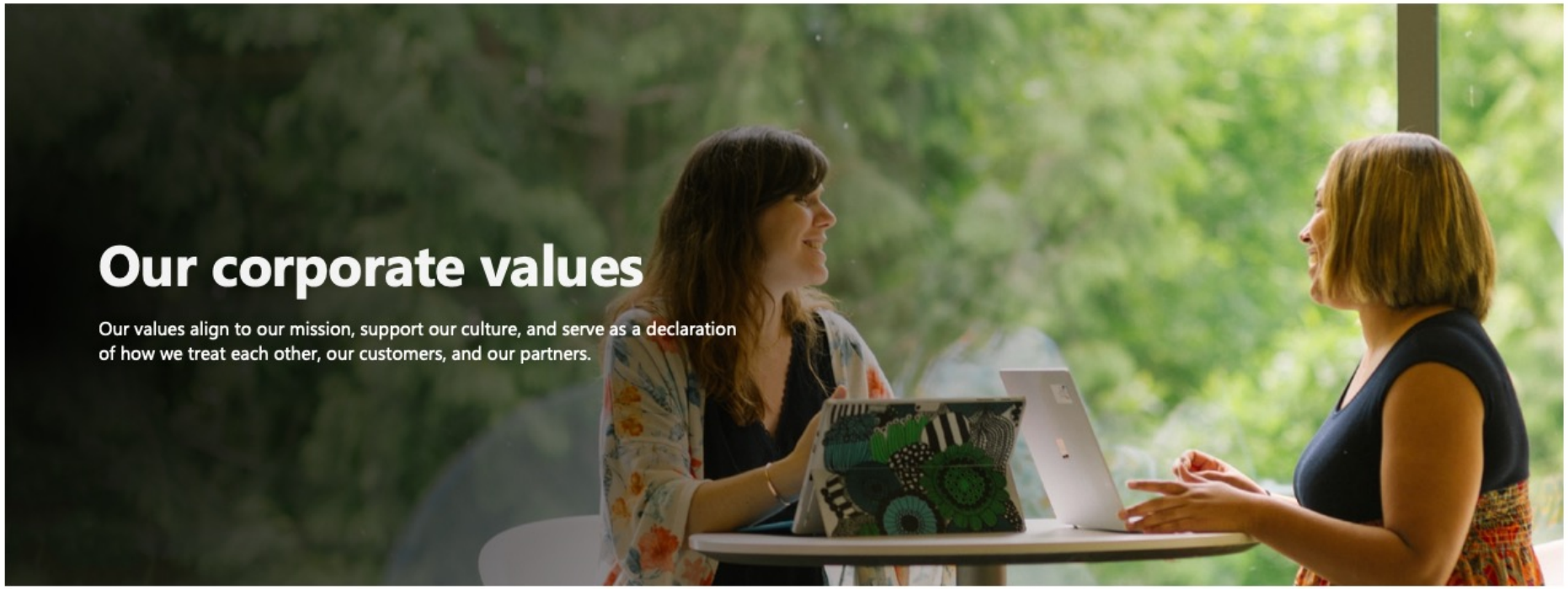
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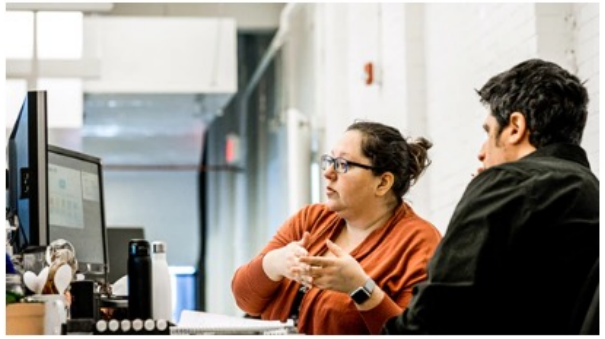


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EH2os_x3S5I

Microsoft

Microsoft | About Company People Values Careers Investor Relations All Microsoft Search Sign in





Respect
We recognize that the thoughts, feelings, and backgrounds of others are as important as our own.



Integrity
We are honest, ethical, and trustworthy.



Accountability
We accept full responsibility for our decisions, actions, and results.

Ikea



About us | Life at home | Behind the scenes | Sustainability | Work with us | Newsroom

We're constantly trying to find better ways to get things done and to bring out the best in ourselves and others.

The 8 IKEA Key Values

Togetherness

Togetherness is at the heart of the IKEA culture. We are strongest when we trust each othe same direction and have fun together.

Caring for people and planet

We want to be a force for positive change. We have the possibility to make a significant an — today and for the generations to come.

Cost-consciousness

As many people as possible should be able to afford a beautiful and functional home. We challenge ourselves and others to make more from less without compromising on quality.

Simplicity

A simple, straightforward and down-to-earth way of being is part of our Smålandic heritage. It is about being ourselves and staying close to reality. We are informal, pragmatic and see bureaucracy as our biggest enemy.

Renew and improve

We are constantly looking for new and better ways forward. Whatever we are doing today, we can do better tomorrow. Finding solutions to almost impossible challenges is part of our success and a source of inspiration to move on to the next challenge.

Different with a meaning

We are not like other companies and we don't want to be. We like to question existing solutions, think in unconventional ways, experiment and dare to make mistakes - always for a good reason.

Give and take responsibility

We believe in empowering people. Giving and taking responsibility are ways to grow and develop as individuals. Trusting each other, being positive and forward-looking inspires everyone to contribute to development.

Lead by example

Core Values are very important to keep the brand promise over time

1'30''



Steve Jobs talks about Core Values at D8 2010 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mKxekNhMqY

Interbrand Best Global Brand in 2025, Best brand also for Brand Finance

INTERBRAND WHO WE ARE WORK BEST BRANDS THINKING CONTACT

Top 100

The world's most extensive longitudinal study on the *role that brands play* in driving revenue and creating market value.

Industry

01 **Apple** -3.7% $ 470.9 B	*02* **Microsoft** +10.2% $ 388.5 B	*03* **Amazon** +7.3% $ 319.9 B
05 **Samsung**	*06* **Toyota**	*07* **Coca-Cola**

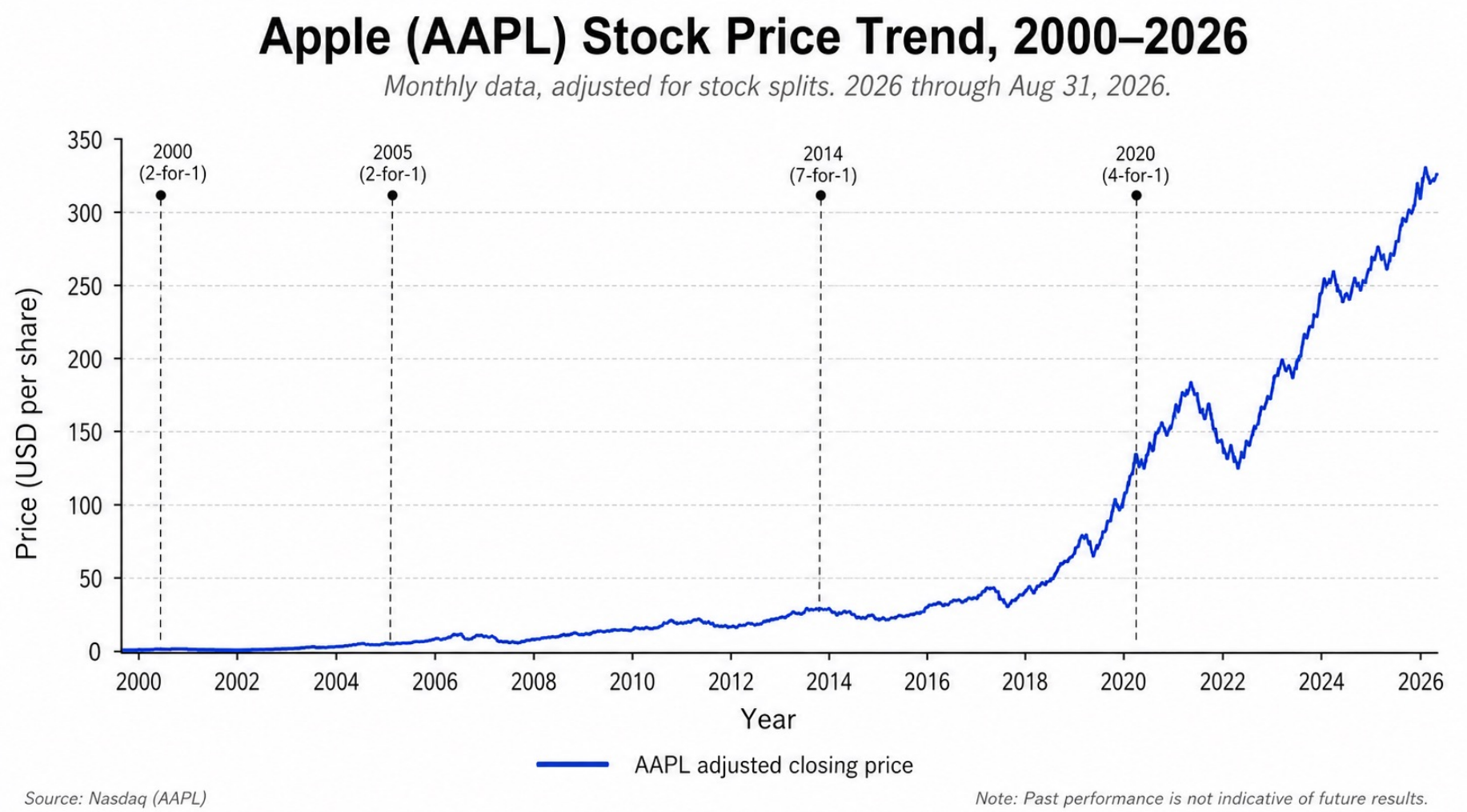
Global 500 2026

Download CSV

Monetary values shown in **United States Dollar**

Rank 2026	Rank 2025	Logo	Name	Country	Brand Value 2026	Brand Value 2025
1 =	1		Apple		$607,642M	$574,510M
2 =	2		Microsoft		$565,250M	$461,069M
3 =	3		Google		$433,075M	$412,981M
4 =	4		Amazon		$369,876M	$356,386M
5 ▲	9		NVIDIA		$184,322M	$87,871M
6 ▲	7		TikTok/Douyin		$153,544M	$105,790M
7 ▼	5		Walmart		$140,985M	$137,183M

Apple Stock Price Evolution, 2000–2026



2.
The brand position Vs. competitors

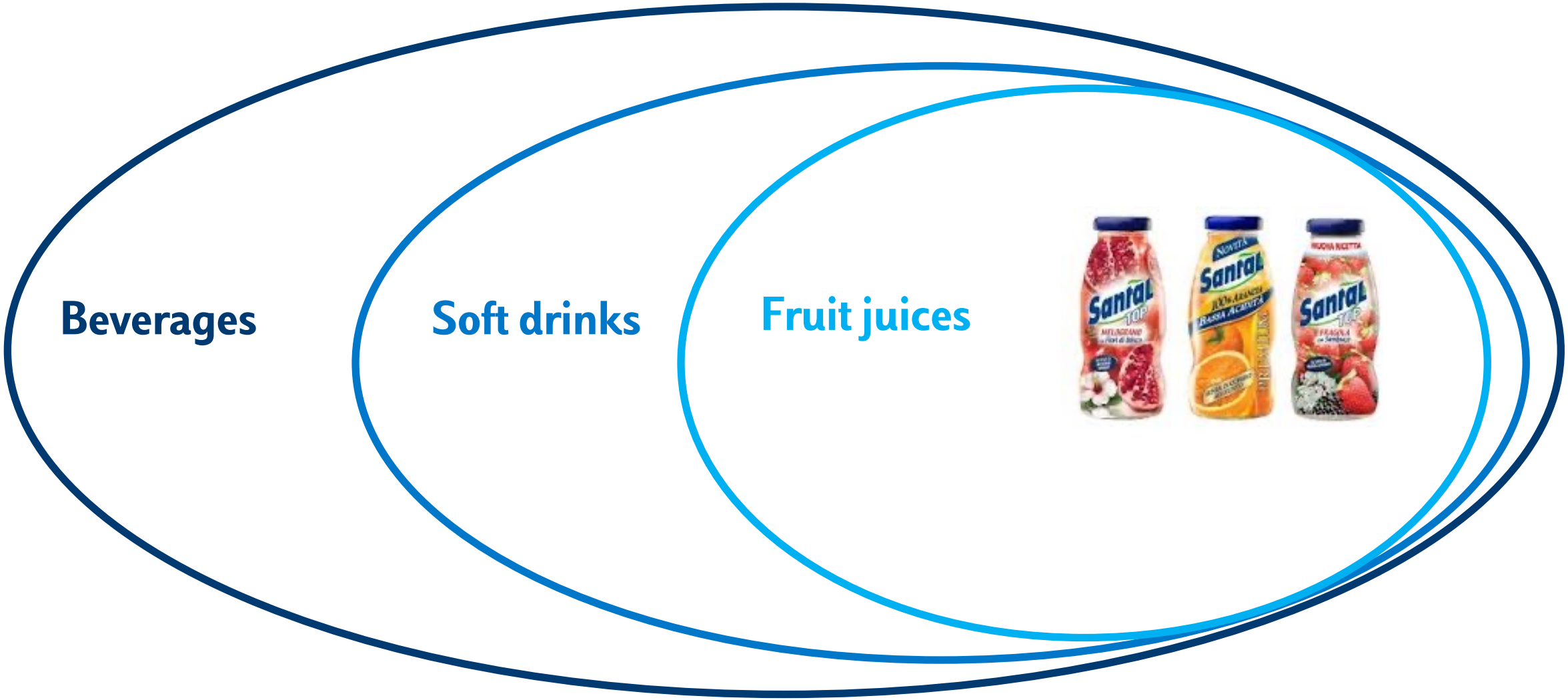
Interbrand model

Brand Owner Perspective

Brand Position Vs. Competitors

(the competitive, relevant and differentiating place the brand occupies in its defined market)

Who are our competitors? We start by analyzing our industry



Competitors' classification

Direct competitors are those businesses that **do exactly what we do** (for the same target customers). They could be **local** brands, local businesses, **national** or even **international** brands, so we have to **look at the entire market** when we're looking at our direct competitors.







Competitors' classification

Indirect competitors provide **alternatives**. They might provide **similar products and services** to what we do, but they're not exactly the same.



Comparables

Comparables are those brands that operate in **different markets** but have a similar target group or deal with **similar issues.**

For example, if our customers are young, we could study how the brands of their favorite products communicate, to **find ideas, best practices and inspiration** for our communication plan





Points of Difference & Points of Parity

Now that we have a list of competitors we must find the «**Points of Difference**» (**PODs**) and the «**Points of Parity**» (**POPs**) in relation to the competition.

Interbrand model

Brand Owner Perspective

Brand Position Vs. Competitors

(the competitive, relevant and differentiating place the brand occupies in its defined market)

PODs & POPs

(Points of Difference and Points of Parity Vs. competitors)

Points-of-Difference

Keller defines **Points-of-Difference** (**PODs**) as **attributes or benefits** that consumers strongly associate with a brand, **positively evaluate**, and believe that they **could not find** to the same extent **with a competitive brand**.

Basically, Points-of-Difference are what consumers perceive we do better than **others**. They could be **functional**, performance-related **or abstract**, imagery-related considerations



Points of Parity

Points-of-parity (**POPs**) are the **elements that are considered mandatory**, a "**must have**" for a brand to be recognized as a **legitimate competitor within a given industry**.

POPs are associations that **are not unique to the brand** but may be **shared by other brands**.

David Aaker on https://www.prophet.com/2013/02/128-points-of-parity/

Brand Positioning Vs Competitors: POPs

While it is important to establish a POD, it is equally important to **nullify the competition by matching them on the POPs**.

While POPs are usually not the reason to choose a brand,

their absence can certainly be a reason to drop a brand.

And they **change over time**.

David Aaker on https://www.prophet.com/2013/02/128-points-of-parity/





PACKAGING NEWS

Graphic Packaging extends range of sustainable packaging solutions for beverage industry

MARCH 29, 2022 BY INNOVATIONS ADMIN

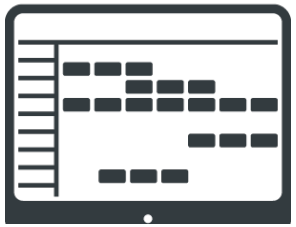
Assessment criteria for PODs and POPs

- **Points of Difference** must be:
  - **Relevant**
  - Distinctive
  - Deliverable

- While **Points of Parity** must be:
  - Feasible
  - Communicable
  - **Sustainable**

What do we need to know about our direct competitors? Everything that we can!

Communication strategy



Awareness data



Advertising



COMPETITOR

Image



Media investments



3.
The target audience

Interbrand Brand Definition Model

Brand Owner Perspective

Brand Position Vs. Competitors (PODs & POPs)

Target Audience Definition & Insights (brand's key audiences, internal & external)

To find an effective value proposition we need to find out who our customers are and what's important to them

Target audience definition

We have to **identify the specific customers** that we want our **brand to be relevant to**.

To do so we use a marketing technique called **segmentation**

Target audience definition

Segmentation means dividing the market of potential customers into **similar groupings:**

1. **Demographic Segmentation** (gender, age, and other physical characteristics)
2. **Geographic Segmentation**
3. **Behavioral Segmentation** (purchase behavior and lifestyle. Things like how customers use a product)
4. **Attitudinal Segmentation** (what customers think, needs or benefits they are looking for)

Target audience definition & Insights

- **Who** are my customers (prospects & current)?
  - Demographics
  - Attitudes
  - Values
- **What** do they **think** of my brand/products/services?
- **What** do they **look for**, what are their **needs**, what kind of **benefits** are they searching for?
  - What are the **emotional drivers** of purchasing?
  - What are the **hidden needs**?
  - What are the **rational drivers** of purchasing?
  - What are the **risks of switching** to your product?
  - What do people currently do instead?

Target audience insights

How can we get this information?

- **Quantitative & qualitative research**
- **Online buzz analysis** (mentions on social networks, comments on blogs, etc.)
- Ask for **Customer Service feedback**
- **Sales team feedback**
- **…**

From the target audience insights: Brand Drivers

Brand Owner Perspective

Brand Position Vs. Competitors

Target Audience Insights
(brand's key audiences, internal & external)



Brand Drivers
(the benefits the brand offers that meet customer needs and drive choice)

Brand Drivers

Brand Drivers

1’52’’



Branding Foundations – Drew Boyd – Lynda.com (course)

Brand Drivers

Brand Drivers are **the benefits the brand offers that meet customer needs**. They are detailed and **descriptive aspects of the brand.**

They can be categorized into groups:

- **Functional** benefits (what the product does)
- **Emotional** benefits (how a product makes a consumer feel, *Self-Image in Kapferer's prism*)
- **Economic** benefits (how a product saves time and money)
- **Self-expressive** benefits (how a product makes us appear, *Reflection in Kapferer's prism*)
- Benefits to **Society** and **Environment**

Brand drivers will help us to create the right message using the right media

Emotional benefits on TV commercials or ad videos
Functional and economic benefits in brochures

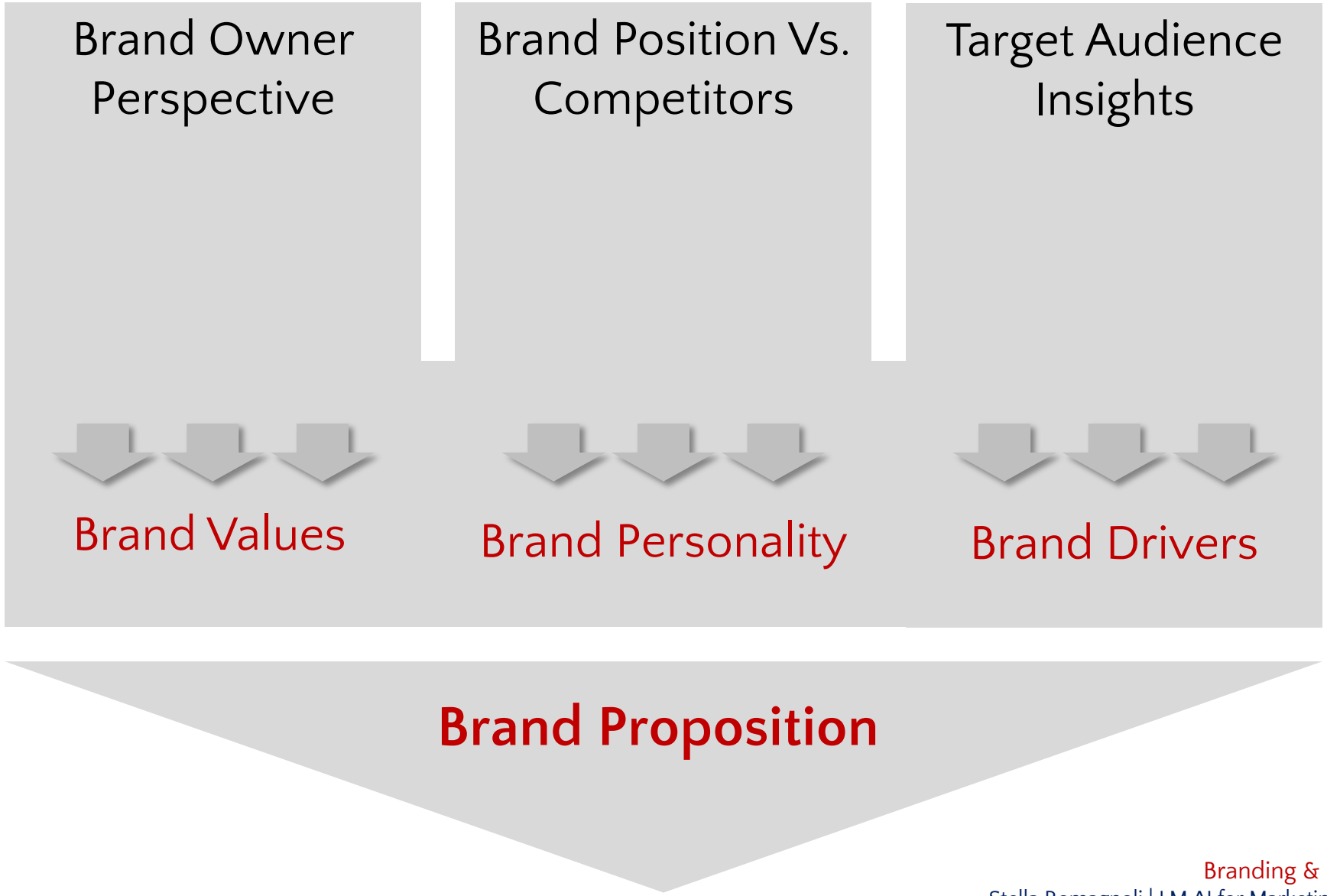
Brand Value Proposition

Brand value proposition

Brand Value Proposition must consider:

- **Brand mission, values and personality**
- **Points of Difference and Points of Parity** Vs. competitors
- What the **target audience** looks for and considers **relevant: brand drivers**

Interbrand Brand Definition Model



The brand value proposition is a short phrase that sums up the brand promise

Brand Value Proposition

A great **value proposition** tells your audience:

- **How** your product or service **solves/improves problems**
- **What benefits** customers can expect
- **Why** customers should **buy from you** over your competitors

https://www.impactbnd.com

"In its simplest terms, a **value proposition** is a **positioning statement** that explains **what benefit you provide** for who and **how you do it uniquely well**. It describes your target buyer, the pain points you solve, and why you're distinctly better than the alternatives."

Michael Skok, quoted on https://optinmonster.com

Brand Value Proposition case examples

2’48”



Marketing Foundations: Integrated Marketing Strategies – Mark Burgess – LinkedIn Learning

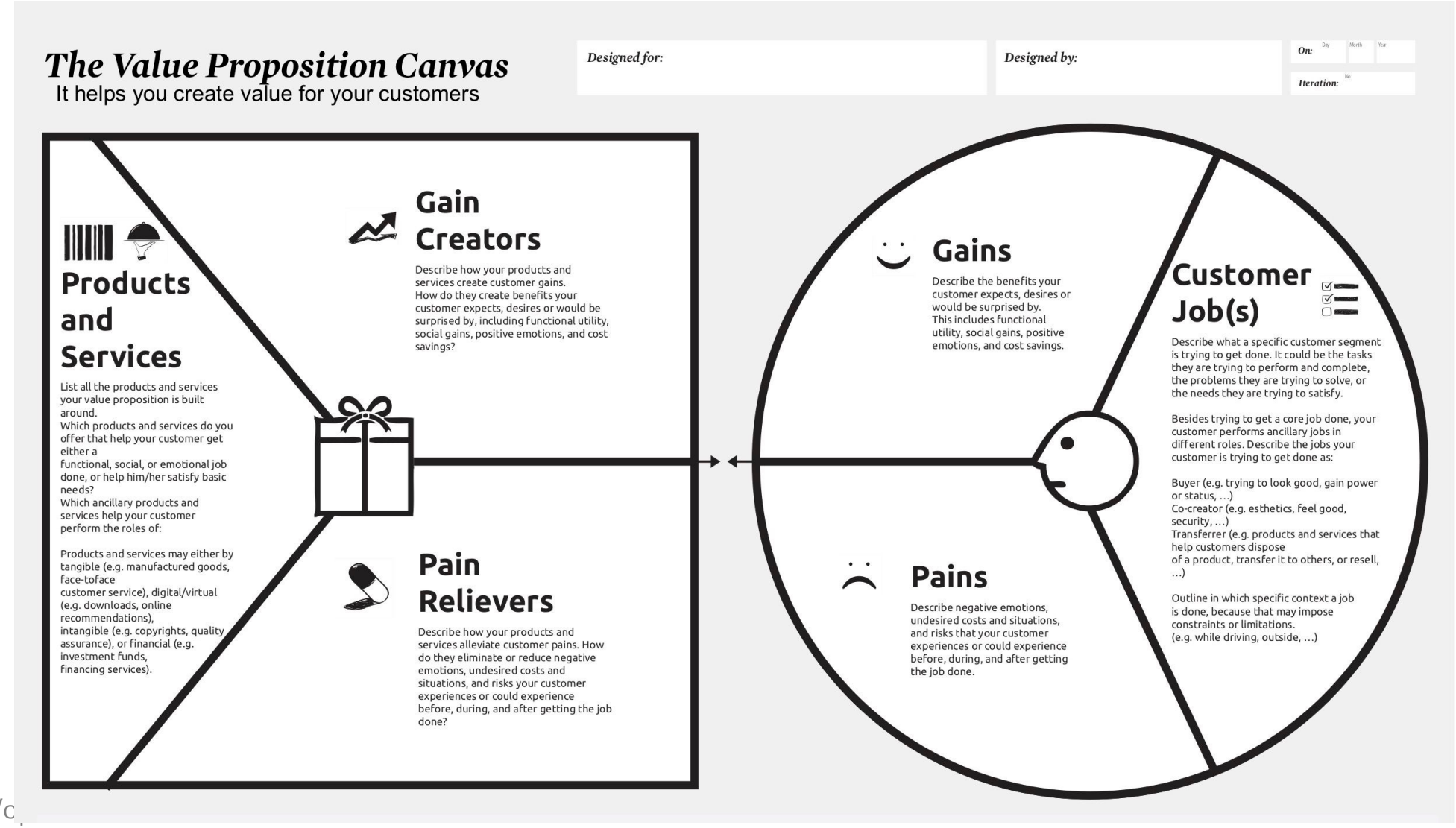
There are other models

The BVP Canvas model

3’13’’



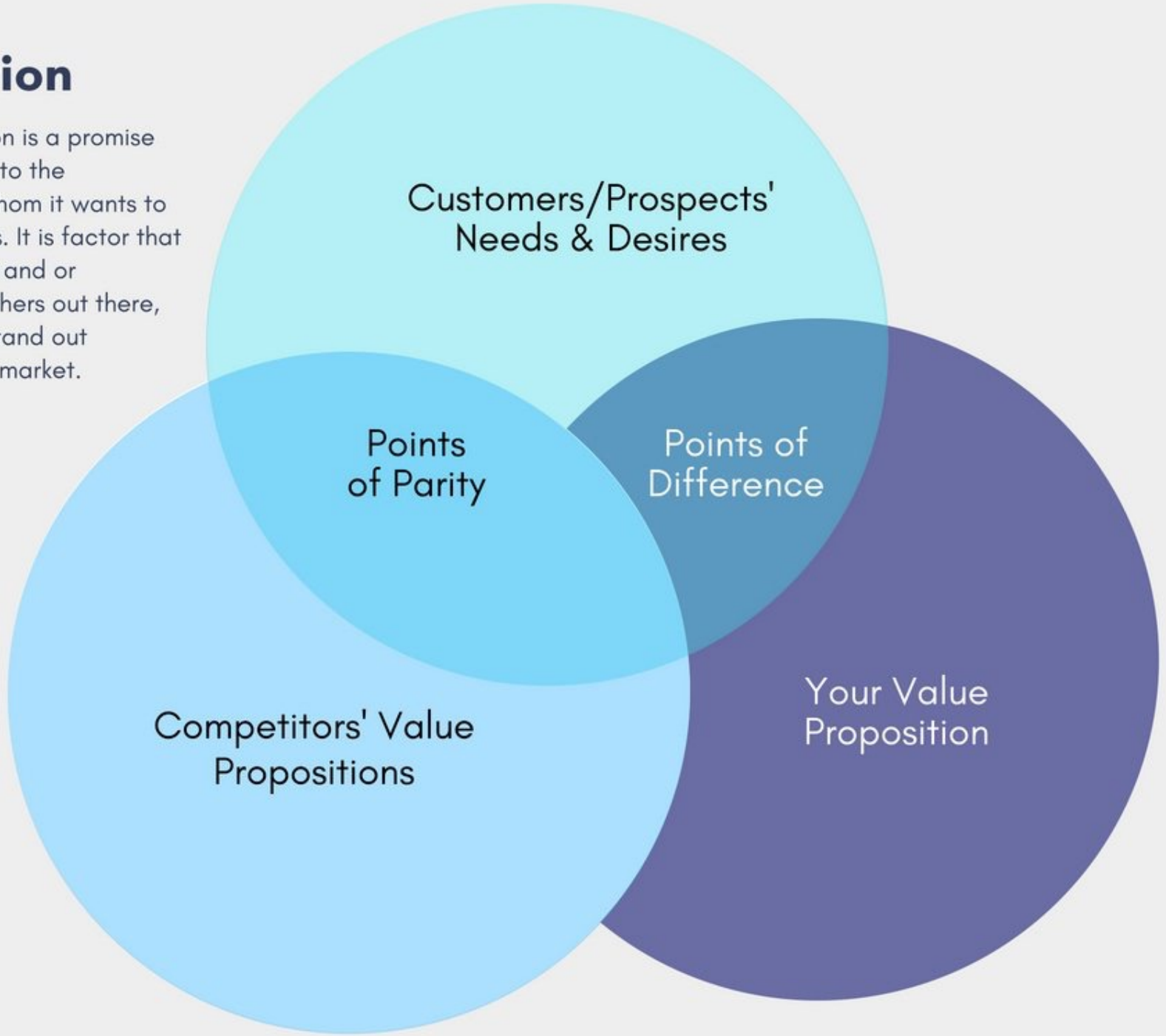
A Value Proposition Canvas



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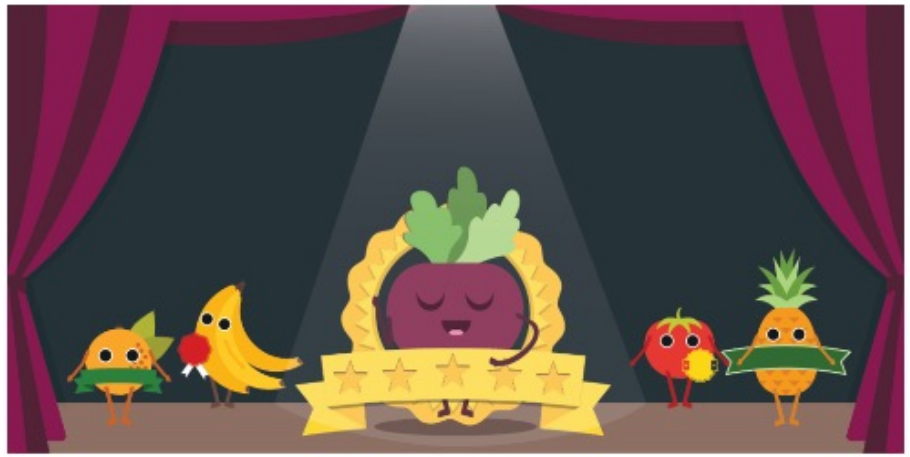
Value Proposition

A value proposition is a promise made by a brand to the audiences with whom it wants to build relationships. It is factor that makes it different and or better than the others out there, making a brand stand out from the rest in a market.



Google template

Overview	Audience	Context	Promise	Rationale	Personality	Positioning



Positioning statement

A positioning statement is a succinct synthesis of your brand's differentiating factors. It looks like this:

For (enter target audience), Company X is the only (enter market context) that (unique benefit) because (reason to believe).

For example:

For parents that want their children to inherit a healthy planet and lead a mindful life, Clara's store is the only retailer to offer both environmentally-friendly products and stress-free shopping experiences. Clara's company knows a healthy lifestyle is peaceful


Kahoot!
Kahoot
7 questions
2_Brand Value Proposition
stellaromagnoli

After lunch you will work on the **value proposition of your digital product** using AI tools

Sources

- Branding Foundations – Drew Boyd – Lynda.com
- Branding for Designers – Sean Adams – Lynda.com
- Mission and Vision statements explained – EntrepreneurNOW – LinkedIn Learning 2019
- Kapferer, J.-N. (1992). Strategic brand management: New approaches to creating and evaluating brand equity. New York: The Free Press.
- Marketing Communication. A European Perspective – P. De Pelsmacker, M. Geuens and J. Van den Bergh – Pearson 2017
- Brand Value Proposition Model, Interbrand
- www.panmore.com

Project work instructions

9Colonne project work: strategy assignment

- **The task:** Develop the **strategic foundations of a digital editorial product** about a specific form of reality manipulation.
- **The sequence:** Study 9Colonne, analyse at least five competitors, then define your target audience, benefits and brand drivers.
- **The outcome:** Write a first **value proposition statement** supported by your research and consistent with the project briefing.
- **AI and team responsibility:** Use AI for research, brainstorming and writing. Verify its outputs and explain the decisions your group makes.



Brand Owner perspective

1. Researching 9Colonne

- **Starting point:** Explore www.9colonne.it, including Chi siamo, Codice Etico, Cosa facciamo and relevant editorial content.
- **Questions to investigate:** What does 9Colonne offer? Who does it serve? What skills, editorial principles and formats can support your product?
- **Evidence to collect:** Save page URLs, access dates and short excerpts. Include concrete examples of content and services.
- **Expected output:** A concise brand profile that connects the agency's identity and capabilities to your proposed project.

9Colonne: vision, mission and values

- **Vision:** What future does the brand aim to contribute to? Write one clear statement about the desired long-term change.
- **Mission:** What does the brand do, for whom and through which capabilities? Describe its present contribution.
- **Values:** Identify 3–5 principles. Explain how each principle should guide editorial behaviour and product decisions.
- **Source status:** Label every statement: official quotation, your interpretation, or your proposed formulation. Add evidence and explain your reasoning.

AI support for the brand owner analysis

Example prompt, after collecting the website evidence

"Using only the excerpts and URLs below, identify evidence for 9Colonne's vision, mission and values. Separate explicit statements from interpretations. Flag missing information. Suggest two possible formulations without presenting them as official statements."

- **Team check:** Open the original pages, check every quotation and compare the alternatives with the agency's actual services.
- **Decision record:** Keep your chosen wording, supporting evidence and a short explanation of what you changed in the AI draft.



Competitors research

2. A list of at least five competitors

- **The competitive question:** Who already helps the audience understand truth, misinformation or the manipulation of reality?
- **Minimum requirement:** Identify at least five relevant competitors. Explain the basis for including each one.
- **Classification:** Distinguish direct competitors from indirect alternatives. Identify comparables separately as sources of inspiration.
- **Scope:** Consider news and fact-checking products, media literacy formats and specialist creators. Include international cases when relevant to your audience.

Competitor research: evidence of the theme

- **The specific theme:** Check which competitors address truth and manipulation, and which mechanisms they cover. Record specific examples.
- **Concrete examples:** Collect at least two relevant pieces of content or product features per competitor, with URLs and publication dates where available.
- **How they address it:** Examine format, editorial approach, distribution, frequency and the role of verification or audience participation.
- **Evidence limits:** Separate recurring coverage from an occasional example. Use “no evidence found in our search” when appropriate, and document where you looked.

The competitor comparison matrix

- **Identity and audience:** For each competitor: name, URL, direct/indirect classification, target and audience need addressed.
- **Topic and execution:** Specific manipulation themes, example links, format, channels, frequency and editorial approach.
- **Trust and value:** Verification method, source transparency, corrections, main benefits, strengths and observable limitations.
- **Project opportunity:** What can your product offer differently? Link every proposed advantage to evidence from the comparison.

Points of difference

- **Points of difference:** Propose **2–3 benefits or attributes your target would value more in your product** than in the alternatives studied.
- **Assessment:** For each POD, explain why it is relevant, distinctive and deliverable by your group.
- **Evidence and caution:** Specify which competitor you outperform and how. Treat untested advantages as hypotheses, with a plan to validate them.

AI support for competitor research

Example prompt, followed by direct source checks

"Find candidates that help [audience] understand [specific manipulation problem]. Separate direct and indirect competitors from comparables. For each candidate, provide original URLs and dated examples. Flag uncertainty and missing evidence. Compare how they create trust and suggest possible gaps for our project."

- **Verification:** Open every link, inspect the actual content and correct unsupported claims before completing the matrix.
- **Brainstorming:** Ask AI for alternative PODs, then reject those your target would not value or your team could not deliver.



Target Audience

3. Defining the primary target audience

- **A specific audience:** Choose one primary segment. State age or life stage where relevant, location and language.
- **Behaviour and context:** Describe how people consume news, the channels they use and when they encounter manipulated information.
- **Needs and attitudes:** Identify what they want to understand, their trust criteria, motivations and barriers to using your product.
- **A justified choice:** Explain why this audience needs your solution and why your group can reach it. Distinguish end users from 9Colonne's existing clients.

Audience insights and evidence

- **Research inputs:** Use available studies, relevant online conversations and direct conversations with people in your intended segment.
- **What to investigate:** What do they currently do instead? What frustrates them? What would make them try, trust and return to your product?
- **AI role:** Use AI to organise evidence, suggest interview questions and compare plausible audience segments.
- **Evidence status:** Label observed facts, research findings and assumptions. AI-generated personas represent hypotheses until you validate them with real people or data.

Benefits sought and benefits offered

- **The audience perspective:** List the benefits people seek, using their language. Connect each benefit to a specific need or difficulty.
- **The product perspective:** Explain what your product will deliver and which content, feature or editorial practice enables it.
- **Benefit categories:** Consider functional, emotional, economic, self-expressive and societal benefits, as introduced in the lesson.
- **Priorities:** Select the benefits most relevant to your primary target. Distinguish expected benefits from those already supported by evidence.

Brand drivers: needs that drive choice

Build a need–benefit–proof chain for each driver

- **Audience need:** What problem or desire matters enough to influence the decision to use your product?
- **Benefit offered:** What useful result will the audience gain? Explain the benefit rather than just naming a feature.
- **Reason to believe:** Which editorial practice, capability or evidence makes the promised benefit credible?
- **Selection:** Choose 3–5 priority brand drivers. Rank them and explain their relevance, differentiation and feasibility.

A brand driver example

Illustrative hypothesis to test with your chosen audience

- **Need:** I see viral claims, but I have little time to check their original context.
- **Functional and economic benefit:** Understand what changed and assess whether to share the claim, with less time spent searching.
- **Product mechanism and proof:** A short case compares the viral claim with the original source and explains the verification steps.
- **Potential driver:** Quick understanding with traceable evidence. Check whether competitors already offer this and whether your audience values it.



Value proposition statement

4. The value proposition statement

First draft template

"For [primary target] who [need or problem], our [digital product / format] helps them [main benefit] by [approach and reason to believe]. Compared with [relevant alternatives], it offers [specific, meaningful point of difference]."

- **Strategic consistency:** Connect the promise to 9Colonne's mission and values, your competitive findings and the priority brand drivers.
- **Writing task:** Draft two alternatives, compare their strengths and choose one concise statement. Avoid unsupported promises and vague claims of trustworthiness.

AI brainstorming and statement review

Example prompt, using your verified research

"Using our brand profile, competitor matrix, target evidence and brand drivers, write two value proposition statements. Identify the target, need, benefit, POD and reason to believe in each. Critique relevance, credibility and feasibility. Flag every claim our evidence cannot support."

- **Team decision:** Choose and revise the statement. Explain why the selected promise matters to the target and fits 9Colonne.
- **Validation question:** Would someone in your target understand the benefit, believe the promise and see a reason to choose your product?

AI use and verification throughout the work

- **Research:** Use AI to find and organise sources. Verify authorship, dates, quotations and links in the original material.
- **Brainstorming:** Generate alternatives for audiences, benefits and PODs. Compare them against evidence and the project constraints.
- **Writing:** Use AI to clarify and shorten your drafts. Preserve meaning and remove invented facts or exaggerated claims.
- **AI log:** Record tool and date, key prompts, useful outputs, source checks, corrections and the decisions your group made.

Let’s recap today’s expected outputs

Expected outputs and final review

- **Brand owner analysis: 9Colonne profile, vision, mission and 3–5 values**, with evidence and clear attribution of your own formulations.
- **Competitive analysis:** At least **five competitors**, documented treatment of truth/manipulation, comparison matrix, POPs and 2–3 justified PODs.
- **Audience and benefits: Primary target** with evidence, benefits sought and offered, and 3–5 prioritised brand drivers with reasons to believe.
- **Strategic synthesis:** One first **value proposition statement**, key assumptions to test, source register and AI log. Check consistency with the project briefing.

Try to complete this task within this week. Share the work but leave enough time to review it together when defining the brand value proposition statement